

REMARKS

I. Introduction

Claims 8 to 14 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

II. Rejection of Claims 8 to 14 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 8 to 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the combination of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0192965 ("Maier et al.") and U.S. Patent No. 6,039,271 ("Reiter"). It is respectfully submitted that the combination of Maier et al. and Reiter does not render unpatentable the present claims for at least the following reasons.

As an initial matter, the Office Action's reliance on U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0192965 is entirely improper since U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0192965 does not constitute prior art against the present application. In this regard, the **April 1, 2003** filing date of the priority application, i.e., German Application No. 103 14 670.9, is **before** the **October 16, 2003** publication date of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0192965. A certified English-language translation of German Application No. 103 14 670.9 is submitted herewith. Furthermore, the international application, i.e., PCT/DE02/01107, of which U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0192965 is the national stage, was **not** published in English. Accordingly, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0192965 does not constitute prior art against the present application. Still further, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0192965 and the present application are assigned to ROBERT BOSCH GmbH, **i.e.**, the present application and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0192965 were, at the time the invention of the present application was made, owned by ROBERT BOSCH GmbH, thereby rendering the present rejection improper under 35 U.S.C. § 103(c).

Notwithstanding the above, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Maier et al. and Reiter does not render unpatentable claims 8 to 14 for the following additional reasons.

Regarding claim 8, this claim relates to a method for producing and securing an apertured disk for a fuel injector for a fuel-injection system of an internal combustion engine, the apertured disk having an opening contour which ensures a complete passage of a fluid, the method including: a) providing a flat, metallic sheet having a constant thickness; b) reducing a thickness in one region of the sheet by one of impressing and embossing; c) introducing at least one spray-discharge opening in the region having reduced thickness; d) machining the sheet until an apertured disk having predefined outside dimensions is attained; and e) securing the apertured disk on a valve-seat member of the fuel injector in such a way that a lower end face of the valve-seat member overlaps an intake region of the apertured disk produced by the thickness reduction, such that the at least one spray-discharge opening is covered.

Although Applicants may not agree with the merits of the rejection, to facilitate matters, claim 8 has been amended to recite that **a lower end face of the valve-seat member delimits, along with the reduced-thickness region, an intake region of the apertured disk**, and that **a vertical projection of the lower end face of the valve seat member onto an upper surface of the reduced-thickness region completely overlaps the at least one spray-discharge opening**. In addition, claim 14 has been amended to correct a typographical error.

Neither Maier et al. nor Reiter discloses, or even suggests, that a vertical projection of a lower end face of a valve seat member onto an upper surface of a reduced-thickness region of an apertured disk completely overlaps at least one spray-discharge opening in the reduced-thickness region. As is apparent from Fig. 2 of Maier et al., when a lower end face of spray discharge region (66) of valve seat element (26) is projected downward onto an upper surface of perforated disk (70), the projection of the valve seat element (26) onto the perforated disk (70) may overlap a very small portion of orifice (73), but in no way overlaps orifice (73) completely. In addition, as is apparent from Fig. 3 of Maier et al., a vertical projection of a lower end face of valve seat element (26) onto an upper surface of perforated disk (70) may overlap a portion of the downstream section (76) of stepped orifice (73), but in no way overlaps stepped orifice (73) completely. Furthermore, as is apparent from Figs. 1 and 2 of Reiter, a vertical projection of a lower end face of valve seat body (16) onto injection port disk (34) does not overlap injection ports (39)

at all. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Maier et al. and Reiter does not render unpatentable claim 8 for these additional reasons.

As for claims 9 to 14, which depend from claim 8 and therefore include all of the features of claim 8, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Maier et al. and Reiter does not render these dependent claims unpatentable for at least the reasons set forth above in support of the patentability of claim 8.

In view of all of the foregoing, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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